

Women in Medical Librarianship: A Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

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Abstract

Wikipedia is a widely used and community-constructed online encyclopedia. It exemplifies the collaborative knowledge-building process that can happen on the Internet. The majority of users are information consumers, while few use the platform to contribute information. In thinking about the innovative ways librarians can use Wikipedia, and in recognizing the gender bias in Wikipedia, we set out to organize a Wikipedia edit-a-thon focused on women in medical librarianship. Our intention was to develop Wikipedia editing skills, and learn about historic women in medical librarianship.

Methods

- 1. Identification:** We identified 9 women who heavily influenced the field of medical librarianship who either didn't have Wikipedia pages or lacked substantial information on their Wikipedia pages.
- 2. Research:** We researched these women using the National Library of Medicine's collection, then broadened our search to include professional organization websites. For additional resources we consulted HathiTrust and Google.
- 3. Article Creation and Editing:** We created five articles and edited 12 articles, making a total of 64 edits. We also uploaded four images to Wikimedia commons.
- 4. Metrics:** To measure the impact of our edit-a-thon, we used the Programs and Events Dashboard from Wikimedia (see **Figures 1 and 2**). Statistics were collected from May 31 to July 15, 2019.

Wikipedia Pages Edited



Betsy Humphreys
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Betsy L. Humphreys is an American medical librarian.
Born: April 26, 1947 (age 72), Lowell, Massachusetts
Other names: Betsy L. Humphreys
Alma mater: Smith College, University of Maryland College Park
Occupation: Medical librarian
Spouse(s): Glenn Palatini

Mary Louise Marshall
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Mary Louise Marshall (1893 - 1986) was Librarian and Professor of Medical Bibliography at Tulane University School of Medicine, and the longest-running president of the Medical Library Association (1941-46).
Born: July 19, 1893, Salem, Illinois
Died: January 25, 1986, New Orleans, LA
Alma mater: University of Wisconsin, Madison
Occupation: Librarian and Professor of Medical Bibliography
Employer: Tulane University Medical School
Known for: Medical Librarianship
Title: Medical Library Association President
Term: 1941-1946
Spouse(s): John Henry Hutton

Loy McAfee
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Loy McAfee is an American surgeon, bibliographer, editor.
Born: July 19, 1893, Salem, Illinois
Died: January 25, 1986, New Orleans, LA
Alma mater: University of Wisconsin, Madison
Occupation: Librarian and Professor of Medical Bibliography
Employer: Tulane University Medical School
Known for: Medical Librarianship
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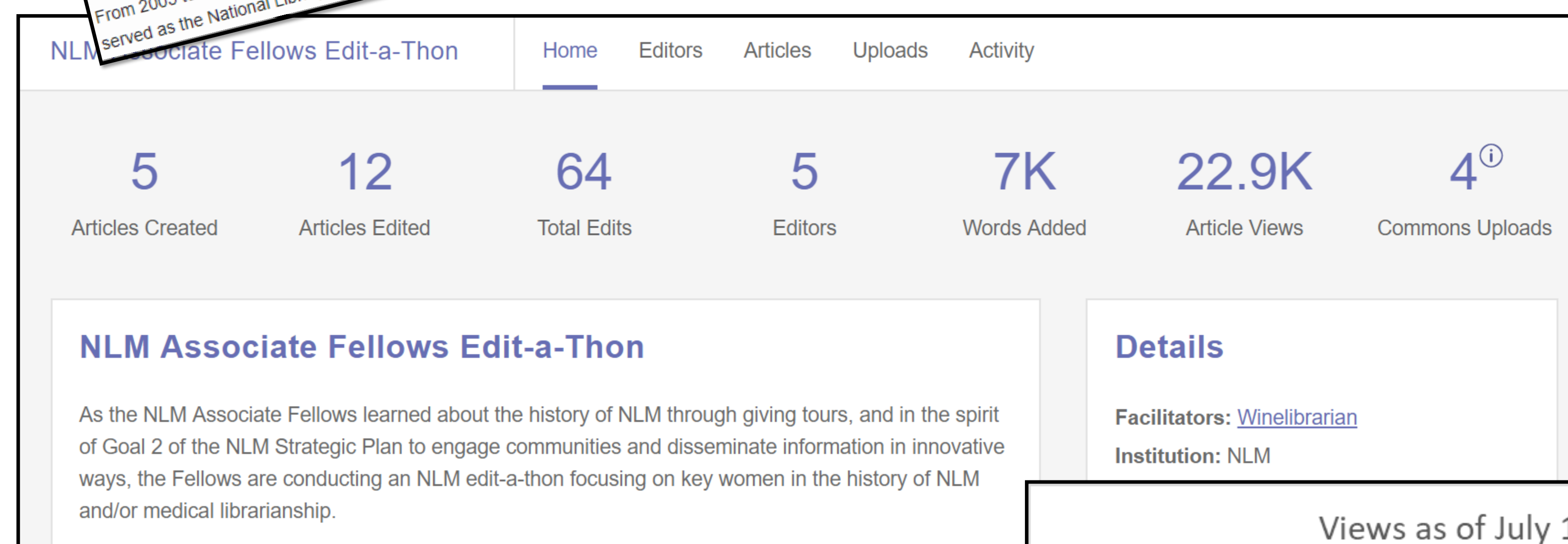


Figure 1

Wikimedia Programs and Events Dashboard

As of July 15, 2019, all articles have been viewed 22,900 times (see **Figure 1**). New articles have been viewed from 21 to 159 times (see **Figure 2**).

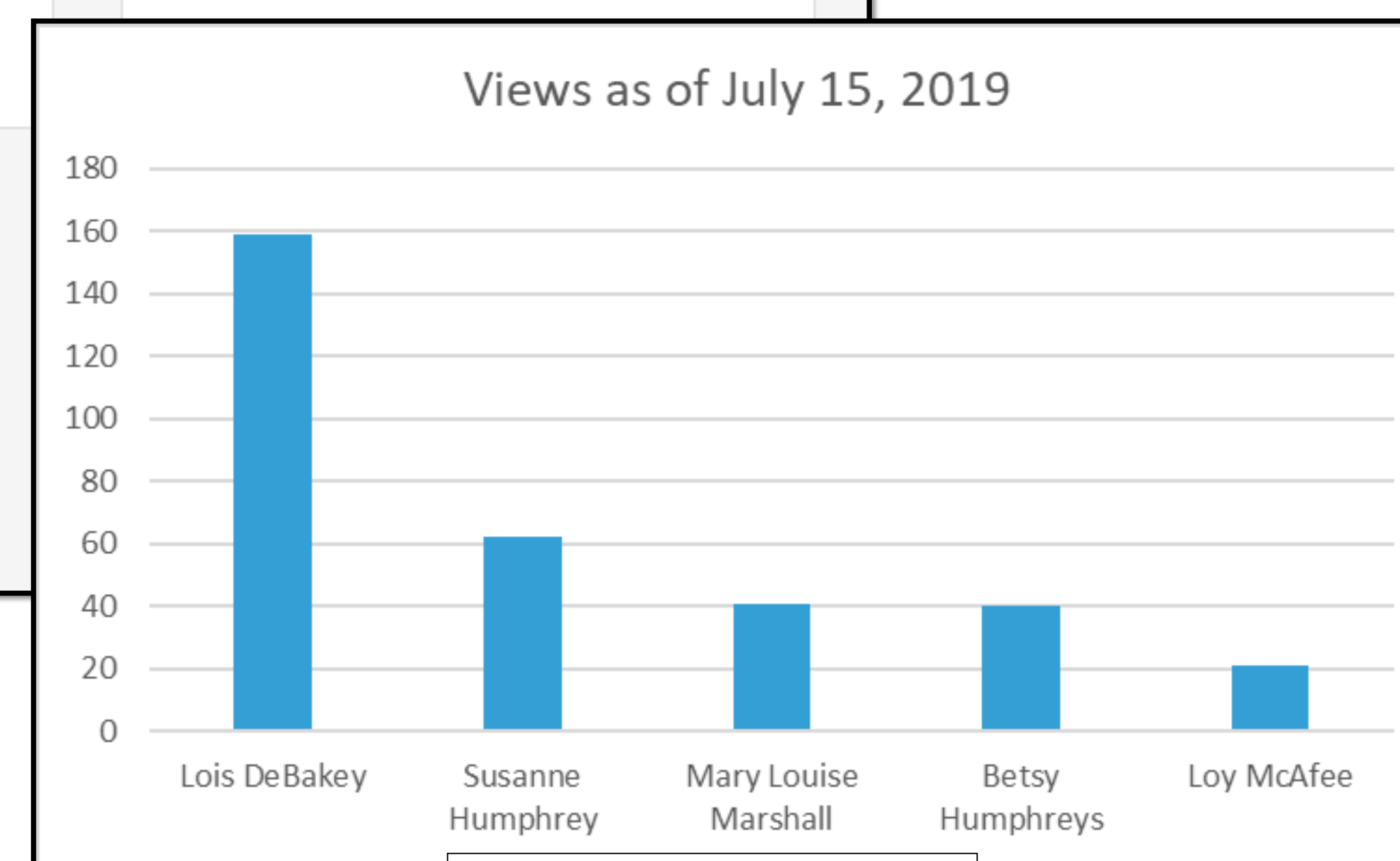


Figure 2

Discussion

- Adding information to Wikipedia sparked discussions of representation, bias, and information literacy.
- Researching and writing articles inspired curiosity and empowered us as information creators.
- Linking to other Wikipedia articles helped us understand how connecting articles with links enhances the discoverability of resources.
- Statistics from the Wikimedia Outreach Dashboard demonstrated firsthand how Wikipedia can help to enhance the visibility of information from archival library collections.

Conclusion

We envision ourselves incorporating Wikipedia related instruction and programming in our future work. Through our edit-a-thon, we developed the skills and knowledge to create and edit articles and to host future edit-a-thons at our institutions.

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For a link to our Wikimedia Dashboard, please use the above QR code.